

The Harwell News

harwellparish.gov.uk

Harwell Feast 2026 - a fantastic success!



The Harwell Feast has been a valued part of village life for **generations**. What many people see as a single day of **celebration** is the result of months of planning, several days of preparation and the dedication of volunteers who give up their own time freely for the benefit of the community.

This year's Feast was once again a **fantastic success**, enjoyed by **thousands** of people from Harwell and beyond. It brought families together, created lasting **memories** for children, supported local **causes**, and celebrated the community spirit that has always been at the **heart** of the village.

A key part of the Feast is the **parade**. For many children and families, it is the **highlight** of the entire event. Behind every float, costume, and performance are many hours of hard work, creativity and **enthusiasm** from people who simply want to contribute something **positive** to the community.

We would like to thank the overwhelming **majority** of residents and visitors who supported the event, **respected** the temporary arrangements, and helped make the day such a success.

Sadly, once again, some of our volunteers were subjected to **hostile** and aggressive behaviour from a small number of drivers attempting to **bypass** the temporary road closures put in place for the parade.

The road closure is arranged well in advance, with safety plans reviewed and approved by the relevant authorities. These measures exist to **protect** children, participants, spectators, volunteers, and drivers **alike**.

Events like the Harwell Feast only continue because **volunteers** are willing to give their time and energy and if they are treated in this manner, they may well decide it is no longer worth putting themselves forward.

Should that happen, we may have to reconsider the **future** of the parade, and potentially the Feast itself.

We sincerely hope that the community will continue to support the event in the **spirit** it is intended — one of **kindness**, patience, pride and **community** spirit.

Harwell Feast



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The Pram Race

sponsored by the
White Hart of
Harwell!



All photos
on cover
and p2:
Martin
Ricketts



Harwell Feast Parade

Results of the Float
Competition:

- 1st Harwell School
- 2nd Harwell Bellringers
- 3rd Harwell WI

Harwell Parish Council Update

The past few weeks have been busy ones for the parish, with the Annual Parish Meeting, the Harwell Feast and the final stages of the Pump Track+ all falling close together. Here is a short update on the main areas of activity.

Pump Track+ grand opening - Sunday 21 June

The grand opening of the Harwell Community Pump Track+ will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 21 June. The event will be opened formally by the Chair of the Parish Council.

The afternoon will include community stands and activities, with a stall from **Re-biked** and a presence from **Ox Trails**, who led the construction of the track and will be on hand to support riders on the day. A **best jump competition** is planned, and we hope to have **food** available too, with the Scouts and the Harwellian invited to be part of the event.

The Pump Track+ has been delivered through **partnership working** and considerable **volunteer effort**, and the Council looks forward to welcoming residents to what will be a real celebration of a significant community project. Please keep an eye on the [Parish Council website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for final details.

Thank you to the Feast Committee

Harwell Feast on Bank Holiday **Monday 25 May** was once again a fantastic day for the village. The hot weather brought its own challenges, but the **Feast Committee** and their many **volunteers** did an amazing job, and the Parish Council would like to record its **thanks** to everyone who gave their time to organise, set up, run and clear away. Events like the Feast are the product of **months of planning** and a great deal of quiet **hard work**, and the village is lucky to have them.

D-Day commemoration at the Harwell Memorial Stone

On **Saturday 6 June** the Royal British Legion Harwell Branch held its annual **parade and service** at the Harwell Memorial Stone, marking the 82nd anniversary of D-Day at the end of the runway from which aircraft took off on **5 June 1944** as part of the **D-Day operations**. The Parish Council was represented by the Chair, Cllr Vaughan Humphries, and Cllr Jez Hawthorne, who laid a wreath on behalf of the parish. Our thanks go to the **Harwell Branch** and its **volunteers** for organising such a fitting and well-run commemoration, and to all who took part and attended.



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Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on **Friday 15 May** at the Village Hall. The Chair's report described a year in which the Council has moved from catching-up to planning ahead: the adoption of the **Forward Plan 2025-2030**, clearer governance through the new **Service Policy** and **Feedback and Resolution Policy**, much stronger communication with residents, and visible progress on the Pump Track+ and the proposed **Multi-Use Games Area**. The report also highlighted the formal designation of Harwell Parish as a Neighbourhood **Area** on 3 March 2026, which starts the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan in earnest.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed comments and questions. The full report is available on the [Parish Council website](#).

Residents are welcome to attend Parish Council meetings, which are held in public.

Email: clerk@harwellparish.gov.uk

Phone: **07749 361957**

Bryan Urbick - Clerk

Louise Edmonds - Deputy Clerk





HARE TRAIL

around
Harwell Village

8th August - 16th August

To enter a homemade hare contact
janette Roberts on
janette.roberts
@sky.com
 or
Janice Markey on
jvmarkey
@googlemail.com



COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNINGS

Tuesdays 11am at The White Hart

1st Thursday of the month 10.30am at St Matthew's Church

All welcome - just turn up!



Harwell WI

For the attention of all ladies who live in and around **Harwell Village**. The heatwave is over and it is now officially **Summer**. The roses and foxgloves in the gardens have been blooming and giving us a beautiful taste of what is to come. Also members of Harwell WI have been busy with extra activities such as lovely **walks**, planning **visits** for members to enjoy. We took part in the Harwell Feast. Our float was "*Ladies Day at Ascot*". We will be taking part in the village **Hare Trail** in July, so keep an eye out for Hares popping up around the village. The **Knit and Natter** group meet every **Monday evening at 7.30pm** in **The Harwellian**.

Below are a few of the talks we can all look forward to :

- **10th June:** Blood Bikers. Life saving couriers supporting the NHS.
- **8th July:** Trust me, I'm a Chatbot . AI, online scams, staying safe.
- **AUGUST:** SUMMER BREAK. No meeting
- **9th Sept.:** Members Tips and Old Wives Tales



Harwell WI welcomes, supports and inspires **all** women. We meet on the **second Wednesday** of each month **except August** at **7.30pm** in **Cherry Hall** at Harwell Village Hall, where we are entertained by interesting and informative Speakers, followed by a cup of tea/coffee and cake/biscuits, and a good chat. All visitors are made very **welcome**, and you will not be on your own, so come along and see for yourselves what we are all about. You won't be disappointed. In addition to the monthly meetings Harwell WI also organize days out, walks, crafts, Knit & Natter group.

If you would like to know **more** or have any **queries** please email: harwellwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

As well as our normal monthly meetings and organized events, you also have the opportunity to attend various events held by Oxfordshire Federation WI. These include crafts, day trips and holidays. These events are advertised in the monthly WI magazine: *Oxfordshire Inspires*.

Lesley Muddiman



Nominate your favourite animal for the next series of banknotes by 3rd July

The **Bank of England** are designing the next series of banknotes, which will include **updated security** features to ensure you can continue to use cash with **confidence** – and they'd like your help.

After a public consultation, it was announced in March 2026 that **nature**, with a particular focus on **wildlife**, will be the theme for the next series of banknote designs. Working with a panel of **wildlife experts** from across the UK, a shortlist of animals, native to the UK, has been prepared that could be used as the **central image** on the £5, £10, £20 and £50 notes.

They are keen to hear your views, which will be an important consideration in making the final decision on the design.

There are three categories, which cover a variety of species and environments. The shortlisted animals are in the table below.

Mammals	Birds	Amphibians, insects & fish
• bottlenose dolphin • brown hare • European hedgehog • grey seal • pine marten • red fox	• Atlantic puffin • barn owl • common kingfisher • Eurasian curlew • great spotted woodpecker • white-tailed eagle	• Atlantic salmon • basking shark • buff-tailed bumblebee • common frog • emperor dragonfly • marsh fritillary butterfly

You are invited to choose **two** from each of the three categories **before 11.59pm BST on Friday 3rd July** by:

- Voting online (visit <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/help-us-design-our-next-series-of-banknotes> and follow the "Nominate your favourite animals" link)
- Emailing them at enquiries@bankofengland.co.uk

- Calling the Enquiries team on 020 3461 4878. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday between 10am and 12pm
 - Writing to them at *Banknote Imagery Consultation, Notes Directorate, Bank of England, Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8AH*
- Andrew Bailey, the **Governor** of the Bank of England, will make the **final decision**, taking into account the public's feedback. The Bank will announce the outcome of this consultation by the end of 2026.

May 2026 Update from Vale of White Horse District Councillor Andy Cooke, Drayton and Milton Village Ward

Andy is covering for councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne while she is on maternity leave.

Planning Legislation Changes

The Government have changed some Planning rules that impact directly on the powers of the District Council with respect to approving or, more importantly, **refusing** planning applications. As I've mentioned (possibly far too often!) before, the Vale is **mandated** to follow a detailed set of legislation (and case law) when assessing planning applications, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan.

The Government have decided to add to that, that ever since 26 March of this year, if we, as the Local Authority, are minded to refuse a planning application for **150 homes or more**, the application must now be **referred** to the Secretary of State (SoS).

The SoS will review the case and state whether we will be allowed to issue the refusal, or whether they intend to "call in / recover" the application (which means that they would take over the decision).

Even on smaller applications, when an application goes to the Planning Committee, if the Planning Committee chooses to **overturn** an officer recommendation for approval and resolves to refuse the application, the application must then be referred to the SoS before any formal decision can be issued.

This does look to me to be quite a micro-managerial approach. However, we're advised that given we have a 5 year housing supply and that the majority of applications we receive for over 150 houses are connected to already-allocated sites, we **don't** envisage there will be many situations where the referral to the SoS will occur. I hope for the SoS's case this is true not only of us but the 200-odd other Planning Authorities in the country, or the red box will get rather packed.

Local Government Reorganisation

The LGR consultation has **closed**. We won't hear the Government's decision until late this year.

We have heard that the Government are setting up a "Greater Oxford Corporation" to support development in and around Oxford. Coincidentally on **exactly** the boundaries for "Greater Oxford" proposed by Oxford City Council in their Three Councils proposal (which is not compliant with the population figures given as a guidance).

The Government have stated that this does not indicate any decision being reached on the LGR question here.

Beyond the unitarization, the new Higher Tier of Local Government ("Strategic Authorities") is still in **embryonic** state. Locally, we've put forward Oxfordshire plus Berkshire to become a Mayoral Strategic Authority. Whilst Buckinghamshire

would likely be a good fit with us, they appear to have refused to engage with anyone.

Early indications are that a "Foundational Strategic Authority" (with less powers) is being considered for us by Government, and they seem to want to jam Swindon in with us as well. More information as it becomes available (The Government had been expected to publish its proposals last month, but we were then informed that they would be now delaying this until **after** the local elections, but as of the time of writing, we've still not heard anything).

SESRO News

In the recent Vale Full Council, we unanimously **passed** a motion asking for "Targeted Consultations" with Thames Water over SESRO (I'm sorry, I can't bring myself to call it "White Horse Reservoir." I did learn that the Vale had considered asking for **legal action** over Thames Water unilaterally deciding to call it that without even asking us, as the District Council is so associated with the name "White Horse," but I'm told that the advice was that it would be costly to do and likely fail. Still, it was nice to learn that it had annoyed so many other people in the Council).

As they've said they want to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in **November**, and DCOs typically aim to have anything contentious or difficult cleared up in the Pre-Application phase, and as we are statutory consultees who will be asked if we're happy with the applicants pre-consultation, we're making it clear that we believe there are a swathe of **unanswered** crucial questions.

Such as the effects of **Dam Breach**, important aspects of **Emergency Drawdown**, **Security**, **Flood Plain** calculations, **Traffic Planning** and **Construction Plan**, **Water quality**, **Biodiversity** net gain and environmental aspects, and more.

They may ignore this, but if they do, they shouldn't be surprised at us pointing out to the Planning Inspectorate that we are **NOT** satisfied with the consultation process, and we will have plenty to point to in support of that.

Community Hub – support

As always, if you need help, do not hesitate to contact the Community Hub for support:

Tel: 01235 422600

Email: communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

Website: whitehorsedc.gov.uk/costofliving

Office hours are 8.30am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am-4.30pm on Fridays

All the best, Andy Cooke.

andy.Cooke@whitehorsedc.gov.uk



Age UK Oxfordshire is a local independent **charity** supporting **older people** in Oxfordshire.

We have a variety of **services** available to help you to live **independently** and live life to the **full**. Our services range from **support at home** to helping **link** you into your **community**, from **foot care** clinics to **exercise**

classes. We offer a **free information** and **advice** helpline, as well as one-to-one support if you have been a victim of a **scam**.

Please visit www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire email: contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk or call **0345 450 1276**.

A Message from Olly Glover, MP for Didcot and Wantage

As summer approaches, I have been busy pushing the central Government for further support for **businesses** and continuing **local visits** across the constituency.

I was pleased to host Alistair Carmichael MP, who chairs the cross-party Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Select Committee, and Charlie Maynard MP, Member of Parliament for Witney, on a tour of Ed and David Clayton's farm in West Hendred. We spent the afternoon with **farmers** and representatives from both the National Farmers' Union and the Country Land and Business Association, listening to concerns about rising **fuel** and **fertiliser** costs and **sustainable farming**. Despite global instability, the Government does not yet have a long-term strategy to support farming, make supply chains fairer and ultimately ensure people in the UK have access to enough **affordable** food. We will continue to push the Government to recognise the importance of **investing** in British food production and to **support** those who provide the food we consume.

In addition, I questioned the Secretary of State for Business and Trade on what support is available for **local high streets**, such as Broadway in Didcot, which are struggling amid **overwhelming** operating costs. The Minister claimed that delivering a 'fast-growing economy' is the solution, but many small and independent businesses have **yet** to benefit from this. I also led a backbench Westminster Hall debate on government support for high streets and raised a wide range of concerns on behalf of local businesses and town councils. You can find the debate here: [Hansard - UK Parliament](#).

It was a pleasure to visit Stanford in the Vale Pre-school, where I met with staff and children and discussed **SEND support**, transport services, and other local challenges. I also participated in the Kingsgrove ground-breaking ceremony, marking the start of construction on the **community hub**, which will become a valuable venue for the new estate. I visited Clifton Hampden Primary School after they contacted me about long-standing repairs needed to their roof, which have prevented children from using one of the classrooms. I will continue to **facilitate** discussions between Oxfordshire County Council and the school to ensure repairs are completed **promptly** and

effectively. Finally, senior staff at Harwell Campus gave me a tour of their new **CO:LABS facility**, which will provide local jobs in innovative scientific research.

At Prime Minister's Questions, I expressed both my own frustration and that of many constituents regarding widespread **dissatisfaction** with the political system. In his response, Keir Starmer said he has full **confidence** in First Past the Post to provide stable government, but cross-party momentum is building in favour of a more **proportional** voting system, where the number of votes a party receives more closely reflects the number of seats it holds. I will continue to make the case for a **fairer** voting system for elections to Westminster and local councils when the Representation of the People Bill returns to the House of Commons.

Other matters I will be working on in the coming weeks include debating improvements to the **Railways Bill**, visiting more local schools and businesses, and responding to **individuals** across the constituency in need of help and support.

As always, if there is anything you feel I can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me and my team at:

olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk

or by leaving a voice message on 0207 219 7657.

Olly.



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Blewbury Players Presents...



the Wind in the Willows

*By Alan Bennett.
Adapted from the book by Kenneth Grahame.
Directed by Ed White.*

15th - 18th July 2026
Orchard Dene Garden Theatre, Blewbury
Box Office 5th June @blewburyplayers.co.uk
Adult £17 / Child £9



GARD Update - May 2026

GARD's summer campaign is beginning. See this as a **NEW CAMPAIGN**, as Thames Water move towards their Planning Application in November. **We can still stop the Reservoir**, as our banners state.

JOIN GARD and work towards a full opposition at the DCO hearings early next year. We can show them that democracy works – three MPs, Oxfordshire County Council, the two District Councils, the town and parish councils: all these oppose the Reservoir plans. Add your name to the list of GARD members and be **part** of that opposition. The joining link is on the website: [Group Against Reservoir Development | GARD](https://www.groupagainstreservoirdevelopment.co.uk/)

Come forward and **volunteer** – we shall be delivering leaflets to all the affected villages and we are planning events too. There are jobs small and large, active and more routine. Please get in touch at gard.secretary@gmail.com

Show that **people matter**. Join GARD to stop the Reservoir.

Advance notice of the AGM: this will be on **Friday July 3rd**.

Derek Stork May 2026



Free tool marking as part of efforts to reduce vehicle crime



Last month, in collaboration with Thames Valley Police, I launched a new **Vehicle Crime Strategy** which aims to reduce crime - particularly theft of, and theft from **vehicles**.

Having your vehicle stolen, or something stolen from it, isn't a trivial crime – it can result in **substantial** financial loss, emotional stress and, depending on where the theft took place, **security** and **community safety** concerns.

Whilst we have seen a **reduction** in vehicle crime across Thames Valley, with almost 2,000 less incidents of theft from or theft of a motor vehicle in 2025 compared with 2024, there is **more** to do.

We launched the plan at the latest of a series of free **tool marking events**.

Tradespeople are significantly **more likely** to experience vehicle

crime because their tools are seen as high-reward, low-risk **targets** for thieves. According to statistics from Wickes, **4 in 10** tradespeople have experienced tool theft across the UK.

Tool marking is one of the **simplest** ways tradespeople can protect themselves from tool theft.

Since March, my office has distributed over **500 SelectaDNA** tool marking kits to electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other traders **across** the Thames Valley, increasing the number of tools marked, making them **less desirable** to thieves and protecting more tradespeople's tools and **livelihoods**.

There is **more information** about **future** vehicle marking sessions and **how to get hold of a kit directly** if you can't attend one of the sessions on my website: thamesvalley-pcc.gov.uk/vehiclecrime.

Matthew Barber, Police & Crime Commissioner

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FRIDAY 04 DECEMBER - A WINTER UNION

THE LEAN TO SESSIONS AT OUR HOME IN ABINGDON
WEDNESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER - GEORGE BOOMSMA
THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER - KATIE SPENCER

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June News – Insect Week: Tiny Creatures, Big Impact

They may be small, but insects make a **BIG** difference to nature recovery.

From **22 June to 28 June**, the [Royal Entomological Society's](#) spotlight week is a celebration of all things **insect**.

And these small critters really do make all the difference... there are more than **24,000 species** in the UK alone and they can be found in almost every habitat. Their **jack-of-all-trades** role spans pollinators, predators, pests, parasites and prey, and the study of insects has long been central to conservation, food production, medicine, and ecology.

At Wild Oxfordshire, insects are **essential** to our **Yellow Wagtail Partnership project**. Established in 2020 by patron Dr Robin Buxton, the Partnership works with the Earth Trust Church



Yellow Wagtail in Oxfordshire,
Mike Pollard

Farm Partnership and Lower Farm, to “*learn and communicate as much as possible about the **impact** of different land management techniques both on this species and the wider environment*”.

As a migrant species, insects are a **vital** part Yellow Wagtail diets. However,

recent changes in farming practice and other human impacts on the landscape have led to habitat and insect **declines**, harming Yellow Wagtail populations. They now find themselves on the conservation **red** list.

How You Can Help

Volunteer

We occasionally ask for volunteers to carry out **small projects** to help with the Yellow Wagtail Partnership; this can range from helping out with **fieldwork** and managing data to creating **visual aids** for our work.

Our partner, Earth Trust, regularly recruits volunteers. Whether you are out counting insects or sitting at a desk, [volunteering your time \(with the Earth Trust\)](#) will **help** them carry out the vital work they do for the Yellow Wagtail Partnership, as well as their other projects.

Have an idea for a research project?

We are keen to hear from **students** and **researchers** about their research ideas and would be happy to discuss the possibility of using our site to support **your** research. [Please get in touch to discuss what might be possible.](#)

Record your Yellow Wagtail sightings

Help us learn more about Yellow Wagtails in Oxfordshire by **reporting** your sightings to [TVERC](#) (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre).

Help to look after our grasslands

- Stick to the path and avoid wandering into the fields as this may **disturb** nesting birds or lead to nest abandonment.
- Be respectful of the livestock, keep dogs on **leads** when there are calves in the fields.

- Remember to take your and your dog's rubbish **home** with you.

- Don't have BBQs on the grasslands, as you may cause a **fire**.

Gardening tips for June

Want to help garden birds?

Don't feed them in warmer months. The RSPB have released guidance on feeding birds, stating that putting up bird feeders in your garden could be putting some species at risk of **disease**. Stop filling bird feeders with seeds and peanuts from **1 May to 31 October** as this will prevent too many birds gathering in one place. Instead, still put out **small** amounts of mealworms, fat balls or suet all year round.

Let the grass grow

June is **peak** time for insects like butterflies, bees, and beetles. Leaving even a small patch of lawn **uncut** creates shelter and food for the likes of Meadow Browns, Large Blue butterflies, and Thick-legged flower beetles.

Go chemical-free

Gardening organically is a good way to ensure that the food and plants you grow are **free** of pesticides or chemicals, and the wildlife will thank you for it too.

By stopping the use of chemicals, slugs, snails and insects such as aphids will return, but don't worry! In time, so will their natural predators, such as hedgehogs and slowworms, to help keep pest numbers down.

Keep Bird Baths Topped Up

Fresh water is **essential** for birds in warm weather. Keep a shallow dish with a few pebbles and help insects drink safely. However, **only** put out a bird bath if you can replace the water **daily** and **clean** the bird bath weekly to prevent the spread of diseases, especially in the warmer months.

Jess Bouwer



Wild
Oxfordshire



Harwell Gardeners' Club

We meet on the **1st Monday** of the month (except Bank Holidays) in **St Matthew's Church** at **7.30pm**.

- **Monday 6th July - Visit to 2 Gardens in North Moreton** (£10 including refreshments)
- **Monday 3rd August - Visit to Englefield Gardens** (£5)

Further details on both trips from Janice Markey email jymarkey@googlemail.com

Date for your diary - Produce Show Saturday 12th September

Janice Markey, Chairman [Harwell Gardeners' Club](#)



Didcot Phoenix Drama Group presents Wyrd Sisters in June!

After the success of their recent pantomime, *The Little Mermaid*, Didcot Phoenix Drama Group is working hard to bring their next production to your local hall!

Didcot Phoenix Drama Group presents *Wyrd Sisters*.

Adapted for the stage by Stephen Briggs from the original novel by Terry Pratchett, this story asks: *what if Macbeth's famous coven were just victims of bad publicity?* Featuring a full cast of **witches**, fools, **mummers**, robbers, **mad kings**, scheming consorts and maybe even **Death** himself, Pratchett takes the works of William Shakespeare and turns them on their heads in his usual iconoclastic and hilarious style.

This production of *Wyrd Sisters* has been long awaited by the group's members after their first attempt to put the show onto Phoenix's boards in 2020 was rudely interrupted by that pesky lockdown!

The show also carries a lot of local significance as its first ever performance took place in Abingdon's beautiful **Unicorn Theatre** in 1991. As you may imagine, Phoenix Drama is very excited to be following in the footsteps of the original 35 years later.

'All Thee Dysk's A Stage', so come and see our players upon it at:

- **13th of June, 7:30pm at Didcot Civic Hall**
- **20th of June, 7:30pm at Harwell Village Hall.**

Tickets are: Standard £12 and Concession £10

Get your tickets at: <http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/didcot-phoenix-drama-group> or follow the **QR code** on the poster on page 16!

Devon Tyrrell, Publicity Officer to Didcot Phoenix Drama Group

Didcot and District U3A

'Learn, Laugh, Live!' if you are **retired** or **semi-retired** why not consider meeting up with like minded individuals and enjoy a healthy, convivial **walk** or **learn** to play an instrument, **exchange** horticultural ideas in a gardening group, or **try** one of the Wine Appreciation groups, then consider joining the Didcot & District U3A with over **30 Interest Groups** (full details can be found on Didcot.u3a site.uk) there must be something for You ?!



New members are always **warmly welcomed** to join (first visit is 'free to see') and chat over tea and biscuits at the monthly meetings are held on the **third Tuesday** of every month for this nationwide self-help teaching and learning organisation in

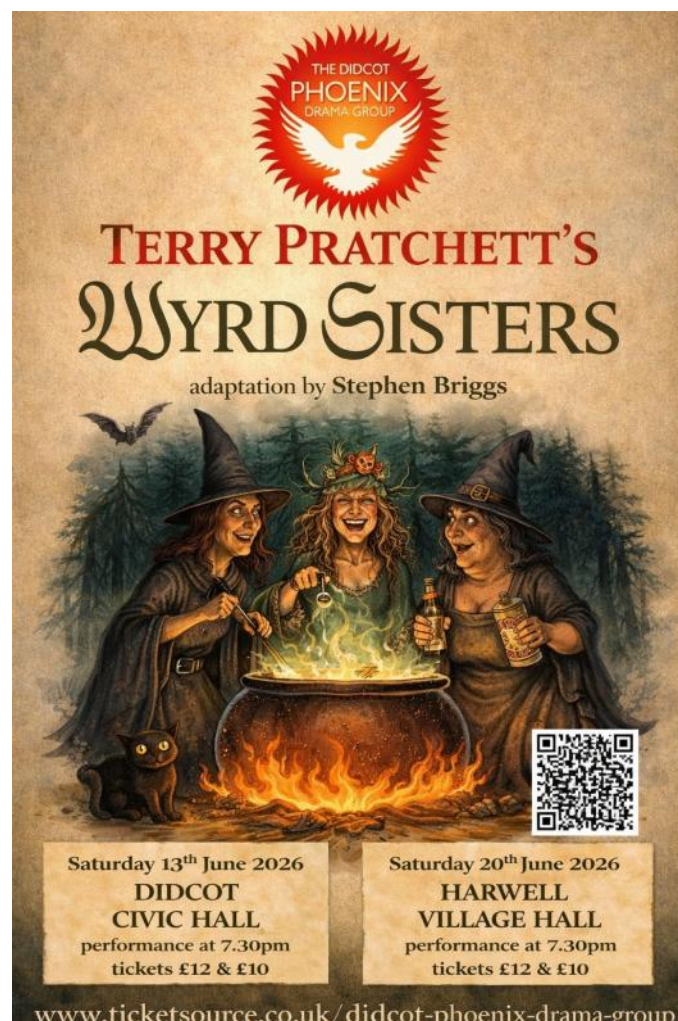
the **Didcot Civic Hall, meetings start 2:30 pm.**

Meetings during the Summer months include:

- **June 16th** An ABC of Victorian painters from Simon Evers
- **July 21st** A is for Arsenic (poisons used in Agatha Christie novels) by Dr Kathryn Harkup
- **August 18th** The Flanders and Swan story by James Mitchell and James Williams

Don't delay, more information for those wishing to 'Learn, Laugh, Live!' head over to didcot.u3asite.uk

Brian and Lynn Burscough - PR Didcot & District U3A



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Ensuring water for life

What's happening now

We'll be **resurfacing** a section of **Hanney Road** where last year's clay compaction trial took place. The road will be closed **overnight** from **Monday 15 June to Friday 19 June** (8pm-5am), with access maintained for properties within the closure area. We'll continue to keep disruption to a minimum, and if works are completed **ahead** of schedule, the road will be reopened **earlier**. If you have any questions or concerns about this work, please email

whitehorsereservoir@thameswater.co.uk.

For more information the [dedicated website here](#).

Big Ginger Tom Music Gig Review



Urban Folk Quartet with support from Anna Renae on Saturday 16th May 2026

Harwell Village Hall was packed with **energy** and **anticipation** on Saturday 16th May as Urban Folk Quartet came to Harwell for an **unforgettable** evening of live music, joined by support act Anna Renae.



Opening the evening, **Anna Renae** delivered a beautifully poised set that immediately drew the audience in. Her combination of **heartfelt** songwriting and **expressive** vocals created an intimate atmosphere perfectly suited to the venue. The performance carried extra significance as she introduced two songs that had **never** previously been performed live. Debuting new material can

often feel daunting, but Anna handled the moment with **confidence** and sincerity, and both songs were **warmly** received by an appreciative crowd. The new tracks hinted at an exciting creative direction and confirmed her growing reputation as a **compelling** live performer.

Following the interval, **Urban Folk Quartet** took to the stage for the first of two **stunning** sets that demonstrated exactly why they remain one of the most **exciting** acts on the contemporary folk scene. From the opening notes, the quartet **captivated** the audience with a dazzling blend of folk, jazz, world and acoustic influences, delivered with **breathtaking** musicianship and infectious enthusiasm.

Each member brought exceptional skill to the performance, with **soaring** fiddle lines, **driving** percussion, **intricate** arrangements and moments of remarkable improvisation combining to create a sound that was both technically

outstanding and hugely entertaining. What truly set the evening apart, however, was the **chemistry** between the band members. Their obvious enjoyment of performing together spilled effortlessly into the audience, creating a warm and **uplifting** atmosphere throughout the hall.

Across the two sets, the band expertly balanced **high-energy** instrumentals with more **reflective** and atmospheric pieces, taking the audience on a musical journey that never lost momentum. By the end of the night, the reaction from the crowd said everything — a deserved **standing ovation** that reflected both the quality of the performance and the **connection** the band had built with the audience over the course of the evening.

Together, Anna Renae and Urban Folk Quartet delivered a truly **memorable** night at Harwell Village Hall, combining fresh songwriting, exceptional musicianship and the kind of live performance that reminds everyone why small venues remain such **special** places to experience music.

Tickets to all our gigs are available from wegottickets.com or by contacting Duncan at biggingertommusic@gmail.com.

For more information about BGTM events see the village hall website at www.harwellvillagehall.co.uk/events or go to the **BGTM website** at www.biggingertommusic.co.uk/events

Duncan Chappell, Big Ginger Tom Music



Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum to unveil its first ever flower show, From Battlefields to Blooms, this July

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, the county's **military history museum** based in **Woodstock**, will be unveiling a flower show this summer for the very first time. The show, entitled *From Battlefields to Blooms*, will run from **Thursday 9 July to Sunday 12 July 2026**, featuring arrangements by Bladon & Woodstock, Oxford, and Abingdon flower clubs.

Members of the three local clubs have spent time **planning** in the museum galleries, utilising the spaces in new and creative ways while **responding** to the stories featured in SOFO's permanent exhibitions.

The **stunning** work of the featured flower clubs has previously been seen in displays at Dorchester Abbey and Abingdon's 2019 Fashion in Flowers show. The arrangements on display in the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum galleries will follow themes such as *Dig for Victory*, *Botanical Remedies* and *Lives Lost in the Trenches*.

The museum will also be running a **campaign** across its social media channels and in house during the show, allowing people to **donate in memory** of their military loved ones or armed forces ancestors and have their name featured in a special *In Memoriam* flower display.



Main Gallery, permanent displays

credit: Cotswold Image Services

Those who wish to have an individual remembered in the flower show can submit names and details **now** by going to the museum website, www.sofo.org.uk/battlefieldstoblooms

Visitors will get the opportunity to experience the flower show, the museum's **Lee Miller exhibition** and live performances by **The Waterloo Band** and **Bugles of The Rifles** during the Bubbles & Blooms **garden party**, a collaborative **fundraiser** for SSAFA, the Armed Forces charity, and Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust. The event takes place from **6.30pm to 8pm, Thursday 9 July 2026**, with tickets (£35pp) available from the museum website **now**, bit.ly/bubblesandblooms



Soldiers of
Oxfordshire
Museum



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Harwell Hanging Basket Competition in memory of John Mackerness

Entered baskets should be visible in your
front garden from 20th - 31st July
when judging will take place by
members of Harwell Gardeners' Club

A trophy will be presented
to the winner at The Produce Show
on Saturday 12th September

Register your entry by 19th July
with Janice Markey tel: 07549625836
email: jvmarkey@googlemail.com



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The Orchard Film Club

June 2026 Update

Many thanks to everyone who came to our May and June films and to everyone who voted. We had a good turnout to both! We will take a break in July and be back on 7th August with the film "Kangaroo".



Check out the Village Hall website [here](#) for more details and a link to the trailer.

Dates for your diary:

- Friday 7th August - Kangaroo (PG)
- Friday 11th September - The Choral (12)
- Friday 2nd October - H is for Hawk (12)

Details of films & trailers can be found on the [Harwell Village Hall Events](#) pages or look out for the posters on display around the village and in **Bob's Butchers window**.

Visit our webpage [here](#) and/or [sign-up](#) to our regular newsletter to be able to **vote online** for the next titles! Please send your suggestions for films to:

orchardfilmclub@gmail.com

Films are shown in the **Orchard Hall at Harwell Village Hall**, doors/bar open at 7pm & the film starts at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £6 (adults) & £3 (children) and available in advance from **Bob's Butchers** in the High Street, and on the door.

See you soon! Alison, Martin and Janice.



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HARWELL ARTS AND CRAFT GROUP

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Walk in any time, come when you like

£2 per session, the first week is free

Tea and coffee is provided, open all year round (except Christmas)
Any craft, learn a new skill from other members and occasional demonstrations. For further information, contact
heather.stevens@btinternet.com



HAGBOURNE CHURCH FETE

Saturday 20th June

St Andrew's Church 1pm – 4pm




**Teas
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Harwell Parish History Group - June 2026

Talks

The talk on **Richard II** and the symbolism of his **White Hart** badge produced some interesting **questions** and comments, which are **answered** below. The talk on May 20th was by Catherine Sampson on "Berkshire and South Oxon **Churches**: hidden gems & stories". This was a talk of considerable local interest from a distinguished historian. Catherine has kindly given us a list with notes of all the churches mentioned in her talk, which is being circulated to all members.

The next 3 talks will be in September, October, and November. *Watch this space for details!*

Talks are always in the **Cherry Hall** of the Village Hall on the **third Wednesday** of the month, starting at **7.30 p.m.** All are welcome, with members free, and non-members £3.00.

The Great Fire of Harwell 1852: why was George Morrell not executed?

George Morrell, aged seventeen years, the Great Fire by setting light to a rick of hay or bean straw started in the yard of **Adnam's Farmhouse**. This farm was rented by Isaac Robey and, like many Harwell farms in 1852, led right onto the **High Street**. Roughly **half** the village burned down. This was reported not only locally, but in London and **all over the U.K.**, for example in Dublin and Edinburgh. The news was published in those three places within **24 hours** of the fire, probably with the help of telegraph. The *Illustrated London News* published a striking, but inaccurate, print of the damaged High Street. In the popular



Picture of Harwell from *The Illustrated London News*, May 1852 (inaccurate!).

taste at the time, the drawing hints at **classical ruins**, complete with colonnaded house – which did not exist!

I have always thought George Morrell lucky to have been given a sentence of **14 years**

transportation to Australia; in fact, the maximum sentence for transportation was life. And I wondered why he had escaped hanging, since, in the previous century, the Black Act imposed the **death penalty** for small offences such as poaching rabbits or damaging trees, as well as arson. I had attributed this leniency to Morrell's youth; the remote possibility, acknowledged by the judge at Abingdon Assizes, that he might have been **persuaded** into setting the fire; and to the sad fact that many accounts describe him as "weak-minded" and "of feeble intellect" -



The Swan River Settlement where George Morrell arrived in Australia.

phrases unacceptable today. (In fact, he died in Australia of epilepsy, a condition which was not well understood in the nineteenth century.)

The *Reading Mercury*, a weekly newspaper, prefaced its account of the Harwell fire in its May 1st 1852 with different explanation.

"The repeated and atrocious acts of Incendiarism, which we are almost weekly compelled to record, fully demonstrate the total inadequacy of the punishment at present awarded to this crime, and clearly show that the remission of the capital penalty (i.e. death sentence) has been a compromise of justice made subservient to a too prevailing sentimentality... The award of transportation to the "Land of Gold" (i.e. Australia) is worse than a farce...and must be the very opposite of terror."

This is interesting for two reasons. First, getting to Australia is viewed as an **opportunity**, even for those transported (who actually had a tough time before they gained tickets of leave). Australia in 1851 had experienced a great **gold rush** near Ballarat and Bendigo, in Victoria state. It tripled the population, thus transforming Australia into more than a penal colony. Next, according to textbooks, the death penalty for arson was not abolished by parliament until **1861**, whereas The *Reading Mercury* in 1852 writes as if this had already been done. This is a contradiction. We'll puzzle away at this. If anyone can shed any light, do please get in touch.

A miscellany from the talk on the White Hart as a symbol, and a pub name.

The question was asked whether the sale of ale was taxed – an interesting point. The Assize of Bread and Ale (c. 1263) ensured that pubs selling poor quality or short measure could be heavily **fined** - a sort of tax. Imported wine was taxed from 1303.

Excise duties on imported **and** domestically produced alcohol were introduced in 1643 – to help pay for the **English Civil War**.

I had noted on April 15th, that in the Middle Ages the white hart (stag) could represent **Christ**, a message from another world, or a **change** in life. I have been reminded that a white hart appears at the end of C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. It leads the Pevensie children, now rulers of Narnia, back through the forest to the wardrobe (about which they had forgotten) to their real home. Again, a member of the audience reminded us that Harry Potter's "**patronus**" (guardian) is described in the novels as a silvery white stag – i.e. a white hart. Lewis, an expert in medieval literature, certainly knew the symbolism of the white hart. J.K. Rowling is widely read and may have known of this.



What is interesting is that, although times have changed so much since the Middle Ages, legends have their ways of staying with us. Not just in literature – but also in pub signs. The White Hart remains the third or fourth **most popular** pub name, coming in with **at least 299** pubs.

JMC, with thanks to Mrs. Diana Collingwood, Professor Mike Lockwood and Mr. Martin Ricketts.

Note for quizzers : although the shifting numbers of pubs makes up-to-date counting difficult, the most popular names, in order, appear to be The Red Lion, The Royal Oak, The Crown and The White Hart.

Name	Date	Remarks
John Smith	1850	Transported to Australia
William Brown	1851	Transported to Australia
George Morrell	1852	Transported to Australia
Charles Jones	1853	Transported to Australia
John White	1854	Transported to Australia
Thomas Black	1855	Transported to Australia

The record of Morrell's transportation on the ship "Stag" 1855.



News from St Matthew's Harwell and All Saints' Chilton!

What's coming up during June and July 2026

I hope that, like me, you have been in awe of the **blossom** this spring. Having come from a much cooler, wetter County Antrim it has been **phenomenal** to see our garden blossom in the County of Oxford – indeed the Woodland Trust have indicated that this may be one of the **earliest** springs on record, with magnolias and camellias in Kew Gardens blooming unusually early! The Bible makes many references to flowers blossoming and compares it to God's people **flourishing** under God's love and forgiveness. In the book of the prophet Hosea 14:2 we read of how the people are called to come back to God and receive his forgiveness *"Take words with you and return to the LORD. Say to him: 'Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously, that we may offer the fruit of our lips.'"* Then there is the encouraging reply from God with a promise to forgive them and to help them to blossom and flourish. Hosea 14:4-7 *"I will heal their waywardness and love them freely, for my anger has turned away from them. I will be like the dew to Israel; he will blossom like a lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon, he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendour will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. People will dwell again in his shade; they will flourish like the grain; they will blossom like the vine – Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon."*

As you enjoy the magnificent blossom this springtime, may your thoughts turn to God, the one who causes all the plants to blossom!

Stephen Luney



Monday morning 9.30am-11.30am in St Matthew's Church - a free playtime with refreshments for grown-ups and a snack for children. Singing songs and a short Christian focused story reminding us of God's amazing love for us and the world. **Term time only.**

1st Thursday of the month - 10.30am to midday - Community Café at St Matthew's Harwell - please come along, bring **friends** and family for good free **coffee** and yummy biscuits.

Thursday midweek Communion (BCP) 11am - 11th June and 9th July held in All Saints' Chilton. Everyone is welcome.

3rd Saturday of the month – 10am to midday Oasis Café at All Saints' Chilton – Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy free **coffee** and a **chat** (always delicious biscuits too).

For full details of all our **Sunday Services** please consult the [News page](#) on our website:

www.harwellandchiltonchurches.org.uk

Everyone is welcome to come along to any of our services.

Deborah Evans, Church Administrator & PA to the Rector



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Cholsey Repair Café - Saturday 18th July

The next Cholsey Repair Café will take place on **Saturday 18th July** at the **Cholsey Pavilion**. Doors open at **10.00** and close at **12.45**.

Talented fixers offer **help and advice** free of charge, to get a wide variety of broken household items back into working order, although **donations** to cover operating costs are always appreciated. Excellent **refreshments** are available next door, in the **Cholsey Community Café**.

Further details can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com or you can email repaircafe@cholsey.com.



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Karen Spackman



Martin Ricketts



Gordon Charlton



Gordon Charlton



Martin Ricketts



Fiona Smart



Gordon Charlton



Martin Ricketts



Gordon Charlton

Other than where stated and in reports of Parish Council matters, any opinions expressed are not those of the Parish Council. Items for the next issue should be sent by **15th July 2026** to

news@harwellparish.co.uk

Printed copies of the Harwell News will be available for collection at the Harwell Newsagents, Bob's Butchers, the Harwellian, The White Hart, St Matthew's church porch and in Harwell Village Hall for users. It is available online at harwellparish.gov.uk/the-parish/harwell-news/ where you can also sign up to be notified when the latest issue has been published.

Advertising queries to the clerk.

Parish Contact Information

All contact information can also be found on the Parish website:

<https://harwellparish.gov.uk/>

Phone: 07749 361957

Post to: Clerk, Harwell PC, Harwell Village Hall, High Street, Harwell, OX11 0EX

For appointments please email

Clerk@HarwellParish.gov.uk

Parish notices can be found on the new noticeboard by the office at the Village Hall.

Parish Councillors

Cath Convery, Patrick Davison-Locke, Anthony Dearlove, Wayne Fleming, Jeremy Hawthorne, Robert Hughes, Vaughan Humphries (Chair), Lucy Lacy, Simon Peacock.

District Councillors

Blewbury & Harwell Ward:

Debra.Dewhurst@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Hayleigh.Gascoigne@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Hendreds Ward:

Sarah.James1@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

County Councillor

Hendreds & Harwell Division:

rebekah.fletcher@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk

Harwell News edited by Alison Fautley, print version distributed by Martin Ricketts.



Martin Ricketts



Martin Ricketts



Martin Ricketts



Cherelle Taylor



Gordon Charlton



Gordon Charlton

Harwell Feast on the Rec

We will have more from the Feast Committee in our next issue.

Save the date for next year - Bank Holiday Monday 31st May 2027!



Martin Ricketts